

CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY

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Open Letter in Support of New Meal Standards

On behalf of the Center for Ecoliteracy Board of Trustees and staff, we are proud to support the new meal standards put forth by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

As a nationally recognized pioneer in school food reform, the Center has long advocated for the advances reflected in the new meal standards. They were developed by the Institutes of Medicine and fully meet the nutritional needs of students. The new meal standards also attempt to address well-established, chronic youth health concerns.

For example, we have been involved for more than two years supporting school food innovations in Oakland. Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) has a combined enrollment of 38,000 students, with more than 70% eligible for free and reduced-price meals. OUSD serves a total of 7.8 million meals a year. The OUSD Board of Education unanimously adopted a Nutrition Services Master Plan in May 2012, based upon the Center's OUSD Feasibility Study conducted and implemented with the support of the TomKat Charitable Trust, the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, and The California Endowment.

OUSD educators, children, and community welcome the healthy emphasis of the new meal standards.

We are committed to building a school district that provides quality education and equitable outcomes for all children – and to make this goal a reality, we have to create conditions that allow children to grow and learn at high levels. This starts with taking care of our students' most basic needs, such as nutrition, so they can develop and reach their full potential.

- Tony Smith, Superintendent OUSD

The Center for Ecoliteracy heartily supports the improved and updated USDA Food and Nutrition Services standards. We are making every effort in our work across the State of California to ensure an efficient implementation of the new requirements.

Sincerely,



Zenobia Barlow
Co-Founder and Executive Director